

CHAPTER 2

WOMEN IN MUSEUMS: THE SHIFT FROM SECOND-CLASS TO FULL CITIZENSHIP

ROBIN TROTTER

INTRODUCTION

Museums are facing challenges in those aspects of management that could exclude or marginalise groups on the basis of gender, race, class or sexual orientation. Policies and practices of these institutions have been subjected to increasing scrutiny for display practices that either ignore or subordinate women and women's perspectives. Also on the agenda are equal employment opportunities for women within museums and related fields, as well as greater access to decision-making.

A number of contexts and concerns have informed these emergent criticisms: the women's movement; wider debates about cultural rights; relations between gender and national identity; and developments within various disciplines, particularly history. One of the most significant forces has been the dramatic growth of social history. Women's history has benefited greatly from this shift in historiographical focus. It has brought into the mainstream of historical interest

those things that were once considered marginal, female, and belonging to nature rather than history. The minutiae of women's lives, in the home, the workplace, the marketplace, in organisations, have become serious objects of historical analysis, (Curthoys, 1993).

Intersecting with these broader social movements, and acting as both catalyst and mirror of such concerns, have been government policies that had their origins in the 1970s. In 1972 the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 1975 as International Women's Year and the following decade the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985). The primary objective of these proclamations was to improve the status of women. A crucial, and at the time, controversial Australian initiative, was appointment of an adviser to the Prime Minister on women's issues. This was followed by creation of a Women's Affairs section in the Prime Minister's Department which, in 1982, became the Office of the Status of Women. Other key initiatives of Australian governments have been: the establishment in 1976 of a National Women's Advisory Consultative Council (this later became the National Women's Advisory Council); the passage of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, and of the *Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Op-*

portunity for Women) Act 1986; and *The National Agenda for Women* (1988) which affirmed the government's commitment to provide women with economic security and independence, freedom from discrimination and equality of opportunity in all spheres of activity. In 1989 the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs commenced an Inquiry into Equal Opportunity and Equal Status for Women in Australia. The Committee was to inquire into, and report on:

(i) progress made toward the achievement of equal opportunity and equal status for Australian women, with reference to participation in decision making processes, in the labour force, in leisure and sport;

(ii) the extent to which women receive appropriate recognition for their contribution to society; and

(iii) the extent to which young women are encouraged to participate equally in society.

Half Way to Equal, the subsequent report of the Committee, was released in 1992 with 79 recommendations covering work and equal opportunity in the workforce, leisure and sport, education and training, women with particular needs; and recognition of women.

While all these initiatives have concerned the status of women, their emphasis has tended to be on social welfare. For example, the Office for the Status of Women listed its agenda in 1989 as: skills training, award restructuring, domestic violence, workers with family responsibilities, child care, education, development of higher education equity goals, retirement incomes, Aboriginal women's issues, non-English speaking background women's issues, portrayal of women in the media, social security, rural women's issues, women's health and the appointment of women to government bodies. This emphasis on addressing social problems has meant cultural matters generally have been accorded a relatively low priority with museums, in particular, being almost completely ignored either as work places or as sites for the empowerment of women. Only in the latest report, *Half Way to Equal*, under the topic of women's recognition, do museums rate a mention. The report noted that, despite women's involvement in a multiplicity of

activities in public life, as part of the paid workforce, as volunteer workers and through their involvement in grass-roots organising committees, women rarely occupy positions of power and concluded that recognition of women's contributions to Australian history is very poor. This lack of recognition, it was noted, is reflected in the nature of displays and exhibits in museums, arts centres, and much of Australian literature. The report therefore recommended that public museums and institutions should be encouraged by the Department of Arts, Sport, Environment and Territories (DASETT) to include adequate depictions of women's history. And, in response to a submission from the Women's Place movement in Brisbane for a national centre dedicated to the celebration of women's place in the building of the nation, the Committee recommended that the Commonwealth Government investigate the possibility of funding a National Women's Place which would fully acknowledge women's contribution to Australian society and provide on-going support and recognition of women's contribution.

The *Government Response to Half Way to Equal* did little more than support, in principle, the above recommendations and to comment that, as part of DASETT's Access and Equity Plan, national museums and collecting institutions were being encouraged and were committed to collect, document and exhibit the contribution of women to Australian society.

But it is not only governments which have been slow to respond to this issue. Jane Glaser noted:

The historical fact is that the 'feminist movement' in the United States during the early 1970s by-passed the museum world. More accurately, American museums have ignored the feminist movement since its inception. (Glaser, 1991:180).

Australian museums have also been tardy in responding to the women's movement. However, within these institutions there has now emerged a feminist critique directed at the forms of representation of women in museums as well as at employment and career opportunities for women. During the mid-1980s lobby groups were formed to exchange ideas of women's heritage, to raise awareness of their criticisms and to encourage museums, and other agencies, to effect change. In Australia the catalyst was the 1988 Conference of the Council of Australian Museums (CAMA) at which a number of papers generated sufficient interest to warrant a Women's Section being established within the Museums Association of Australia (MAA). The Women's Section has sub-

sequently maintained pressure to ensure women's issues remain on the agenda.

The specific concerns articulated in critiques of museums in respect to women's issues have focused on achieving more balanced gender representation in collections, exhibitions and publications; pursuing equal employment opportunities for women in museums; and advocating appropriate government policies to support these ambitions. This chapter explores these concerns as they have been articulated in recent museums and policy debates, describes some notable examples that illustrate the changing relationship between museums and women, and suggests resources that may be of value to museum workers, visitors and pressure groups interested in the relations between women and museums.

REPRESENTATION AND MUSEUM PRACTICES

This section considers recent feminist criticisms of museums about the representation of women's lives. These criticisms have highlighted both the invisibility of women and their under-representation in Australian museums as well as the marginalisation of women which occurs when women are portrayed as stereotypical or generic figures. Where pertinent, examples of 'best practice' in overseas museums will be drawn on to suggest some of the steps that might be taken to further improve the representation of women in Australia.

WOMEN'S INVISIBILITY IN MUSEUM DISPLAYS

Museums present a past which is largely devoid of women; they construct the appearance of a past in which gender is not a dimension. (Jones, 1991: 24).

Through the objects that they assemble, museums make particular aspects of the past visible. The choice of objects and how to arrange them have important consequences for whose historical activities are made visible. A persistent criticism of museums has been that the work and contributions of women are more often ignored or given less prominence in displays than is the work and interests of men. Sian Jones argues that masculine interpretations of the past and subordination of women to incidental roles is a product of a patriarchal society. Subordination of women by such powerful social institutions as museums confirms women's invisibility and lower status not only in the past, but also at present. Women's absence from, or invisibility in, museum displays can be a result of subject matter, the prioritising

of male interests and values, research priorities or representational 'difficulties'.

Choice of Subject Matter. The thematic focus of many museums precludes, or makes difficult, the inclusion of material representing the lives and interests of women. Our Commonwealth museums, to date, have been constructed around the male topics of war and maritime life with, firstly, the Australian War Memorial and, more recently, the Australian National Maritime Museum. In the Australian War Memorial women are marginalised to a separate gallery (Daniels, 1991: 222-3) and the Maritime Museum, it has been argued, is 'masculine' in conception and preoccupation, and even with the best will in the world, cannot be made to represent women's lives and interests adequately (Clark, 1992: 5).

At State, regional and local levels, more diversity prevails although there is still a prevalence of masculine themes in specialist museums. These include: transport museums (rail, motor vehicles, aviation, horse-drawn vehicles etc), maritime museums, sports museums (concentrating on, or featuring men's sport or famous male sporting figures), and industry museums devoted to male-dominated industries such as sugar, timber, wool etc., and the ever-popular mining museums. Even in displays of frontier life as represented in museums such as the Stockman's Hall of Fame in Longreach (Queensland), women's lives are prescribed and limited by the predominant message that the frontier was, and still is, a man's world.

Masculine themes inherent in such specialist museums are reinforced by a predominance in general interest museums of machinery, weaponry, scientific equipment, etc. and a predisposition to displaying objects which represent technology, progress, work, and war. Several critics have argued that displays at the Powerhouse Museum are dominated by large machines. According to Frank Campbell, the Powerhouse collection demonstrates a shift from 'inexpensive but coherent collections of objects to staggeringly expensive aggregations of objects' that recreates a fetishism of the museum object, and one that is 'macho' in orientation:

Trains, planes, Chinese Bell, guns, swords and fast cars from the Twenties' are juxtaposed. Sheer size, age, rarity, and a very British taste for steam engines and locomotives shape the Stage 1 display. It's a macho exhibition. (Campbell, 1983: 13).

The Powerhouse's permanent exhibit, '... *Never done*': *Women's work in the home*, is acknowledged as one of the best Australian displays on domestic technology but is

overpowered by the overwhelming masculinity of the larger technological displays which are the clear focus of the museum (Anderson, 1990: 4).

Prominence of Male Values. When male values and interests provide the governing principle for museum displays the potential for museums to speak to and about women's experiences is often under-realised. In such cases, even though temporary or small displays may highlight women or women's culture, these

scarcely impinge on the overall message of the museum which continues to be directed to an imagined male audience (Anderson, 1993: 17).

In a similar vein, Margaret Maynard claims the Queensland Museum accords a high profile to 'masculine exhibits like aeroplanes, steam engines and casts of dinosaurs' but rarely displays part of its extensive collection of nineteenth and twentieth century clothing (Maynard, 1992: 81). A male-oriented, ideology of progress informs not only natural history displays but also those devoted to social history and material culture; technological displays focus on either the inventor (male) or function (where used by males); and, where heroic figures are represented, they are most often men.

Even within the house-museum where one would expect women's concerns to be accorded major significance, women can, and do, remain invisible. As Marilyn Lake has argued, it is architectural significance which has been the principal reason for preserving most of these buildings. Or they have been preserved as

testaments to the talent of individual men (and in the twentieth century, the exceptional woman) who designed them and those wealthy enough to commission them (Lake, 1991: 46).

Where historical significance has been a motivating force for preservation, again it is mostly where associations with prominent or famous men, pioneers or historical events, have been identified. One of Melbourne's most popular tourist attractions is Captain Cook's Cottage which was brought out from England and located in the Treasury Gardens. Ballarat proudly presents to its visitors the cottage of Adam Lindsay Gordon which was built in the Western district and relocated to the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. Similarly, Bert Hinkler's home in England was dismantled and relocated to Bundaberg to house a Hinkler museum. An exception to this trend of 'museumising' the homes of famous men is the opening of May Gibb's cottage, Nutcote, in Sydney. Nutcote will operate as a memorial to May Gibb.

Display strategies for house-museums tend to focus on material consumption with reconstructions that stress architectural magnificence, and the opulent furnishings and decoration that graced these buildings at the peak of their history. But in these historic houses there is seldom any evidence of domestic production. In the past, servant quarters and work areas such as kitchens, laundries etc. may have been removed, closed, modernised or converted to office and administrative spaces. Even though new criteria for evaluating historical significance are gradually being adopted by various heritage bodies, Lake contends these criteria are still 'masculinist' in that they continue to obscure the fact that the home was, and is, a workplace and place of industry, especially for women.

Houses are texts, they constitute valuable documents of women's historical agency as well as suggesting the limits to that agency. (Lake, 1991: 54).

Research Priorities. Until recently women's material culture has not been high on the research priorities of museums, academic institutions or heritage organisations. Partly as a consequence of this neglect, museums lack adequate research resources on which to draw so that it is often difficult for them to respond to demands that museums give more attention to women's lives. Unfortunately it will take some time before the consequences of this neglect can be repaired. In particular, research into women's material culture has long been overlooked. As Ruth Cowan has argued:

The crib, the playpen, the teething ring and the cradle are as much a part of our culture and our sense of

TABLE 1. Academic Output Relating to Women — Selected Museums, 1991/1992 (Source: various annual reports).

Museum	Number of Publications	Publications on Women
Queensland Museum	Total 173 Natural science 148 History 17 Maritime archaeology 5 General 3	
Australian Museum	Total 194 Disciplinary topics (Anthropology, Earth & Environmental Sciences, Zoology) 155 General topics (Exhibitions, Education, Conservation, Corporate services, etc.) 39	<i>On course: studying science communication for fun and profit.</i> C. Arkinstall <i>Getting back: returning to science after a career break.</i> C. Arkinstall <i>Museums and access — Whose knowledge? Whose post?</i> A. Skates*
Powerhouse Museum	Total 74	<i>Profile of Jackie Menzies.</i> H. Feltham <i>Lorraine Lee's work for the wool.</i> L. Mitchell <i>Hedda Morrison 1908-1991.</i> C. Roberts <i>Dress and textiles.</i> J. Sanders
Australian War Memorial	Total 35	<i>The coming of the Irish orphan girls to the Southern Tablelands, March 1850.</i> Richard Reid <i>That famine is pressing each day more heavily upon them: The emigration of Irish convict families to NSW 1848-1852.</i> Richard Reid
National Museum of Australia	Total 16 In production 9	<i>A new project on women scientists.</i> R. Lane <i>Museum collects women scientists.</i> R. Lane <i>Olive Muriel Pink 1884-75.</i> J. Marcus <i>Women's cricket collections.</i> M. Stell <i>Women's political history — A Guide to Sources.</i> M. Sawyer
Museum of Victoria	Total 73 Human Studies 14 Science/technology 5 Natural sciences 54	<i>Women's work: Aboriginal women's artefacts in the Museum of Victoria.</i> Aboriginal Studies Dept <i>Museums: Are you using one?</i> L. Dale <i>Work in the home education Kit.</i> L. Dale, J. Barnard, N. Murphy, D. Tyler <i>Health ephemera in the history collection at the Museum of Victoria.</i> L. Dale
Tasmanian Museum	Total 35	<i>Julie Stoneman: Potter.</i> J.C. Clark
Western Australian Museum	Natural sciences 120 * Majority devoted to maritime archaeology.	

ourselves as harvesting machines and power looms, yet we know almost nothing of their history. (Cowan, 1979: 30-32).

An annual sample of publications from major Australian museums gives credence to Cowan's argument. (Table 1) An historically induced orientation to natural history research is indicated at the Queensland Museum, the Australian Museum, the Museum of Victoria, the Tasmanian Museum and the Western Australian Museum.

The Difficulty of Representing Domestic Work. Representing women's domestic work is chal-

lenging because domestic work is invisible — made so by a gendered view of 'work' which perceives such activities as unskilled, trivial and of lowly status. That women's domestic work is more about processes and social relations than production of goods is also problematic. The repetitive nature of domestic work where chores are never-ending, never done, also exacerbates the 'invisibility' of women's work and presents a challenge to interpretation techniques that rely on static displays and artefactual materials. A further difficulty for museum interpretations is how to present the drudgery, routineness, extent and exploitation of much of women's work. As Margaret Anderson and Kylie Winkworth write:

Another clue to the invisibility of women's work lies in the nature of repetitive tasks and in the production of goods with a brief 'shelf life'. A lifetime's washing and cooking leaves no monuments.' (Anderson & Winkworth, 1991: 150).

Consider the difficulty of depicting the conditions of work as described by Beverley Kingston in her account of women's domestic work in the late 1880s:

She [the domestic servant] was required to rise between 6 and 6.30am (except on washing day when she rose at 4am), clean the passages, kitchen and dining room before breakfast, light or stoke the fire, prepare and serve breakfast. After breakfast was cleared away she would clean, wash, or iron depending on the day of the week, prepare and serve luncheon for 1pm and clear it away. She might have the afternoon to herself until 4pm when preparation for dinner was commenced, but she might also be required to finish work left over from the morning, run errands, mind children, mend or sew. If dinner was served at 6pm, she might be through the washing up and removing the coffee tray from the sitting room as recommended by 7.30pm. Thereafter, she was free to go out if given permission, but expected to be home and in bed by 10pm ... If the household contained children, there would be considerably more work over longer hours, and if the family were given to entertaining, it would not be possible to finish work by anything like 7.30pm every evening. It should be noticed that no time was allowed for days off, even at weekends, although considerate families were expected to allow plenty of time for church going on Sundays. (Kingston, 1975: 31-32).

SUBORDINATION – MARGINALISATION – STEREOTYPING

Where women are visible in museums, it is how they are positioned and represented, both spatially within the museum itself and within display contexts, that constructs meanings about women, their roles and their value within society. Few would disagree with the premise that museum representations construct meaning about society in general, but as Gaby Porter has argued,

museum representations also have a gendered nature.

Representations of femininity serve to bolster and confirm the main/male story of progress and achievement. Masculinity and femininity are constructed in a series of opposites — work and home, productive labour and pastimes, active and passive, culture and nature — in which 'woman' is the subordinate partner. (Porter, 1991: 160).

In Australia many museum displays focus on stereotypical images of pioneering women which confirms Porter's argument.

Pioneering Women. Popular museum displays depict the pioneer housewife in her colonial kitchen, fashionably-decorated parlour, or makeshift slab hut. Evaluating how such displays represent women's interests and roles reveals a range of stereotypical images which excludes Aborigines, non-Anglo-Saxon, twentieth century, urban, single, working, unemployed, poor, prostitute and convict women.

The pioneering woman is often found in provincial or community museums. The period is usually late nineteenth century, or at least pre-electric, thus localising 'pioneering' to a particular period rather than seeing it as an ongoing activity in Australia. Women's interests are assumed to reside in evidence of women's 'work' — examples of needlework, sewing and costume, cooking implements, kitchen or sometimes parlour backgrounds or at least inside the home.

Women are most often represented as 'civilising' influences on the stereotyped 'bushman' and 'women's things' in museum displays draw out this contrast. Museum organisers like to display items such as delicately and finely-embroidered purses, best lace gloves, ornate fans etc., alongside and in contrast to mining tools, farm equipment, and crudely fashioned bush furniture. Organising objects in this way re-constructs popular perceptions of women's place in the past, and in consequence, in the present. Many small community history museums favour this static style of display where objects are ranged along classificatory lines with row upon row of similar or associated items spatially divided along gendered interest lines. Typifying this approach is the historical display at the Gympie Gold Mining Museum (Queensland). Along one wall are 'women's' items represented by collections of fine china, clocks, samplers, family Bibles, sewing machines, kitchenware — many items obviously 'decorative' and ornamental but all implying refinement, taste, cleanliness and good-housewifery. Against the opposite wall are ob-

jects relating to 'men's work' — augers, mining tools and equipment, farm implements, barbed wire, a gun case, and mineral samples — all utilitarian objects that connote austerity, hard work, ingenuity, and a basic life-style.

An excellent example of this 'civilising influence' represented through aural rather than artefactual evidence may be found in the Slab Hut display at the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame. As the visitor enters a reproduction of a Slab Hut, an anonymous woman's voice starts to relate her experiences of the outback. She refers to hardship, to the loneliness of the bush when her man is away seeking work (shades of Lawson's *Drovers' Wife*) but looks forward to the coming of other women in the area in the hope that their presence will bring about a school for the children and a softening of the harsh and lonely life.

Such reconstructions of pioneering life conjure up images of battlers, hardship, and womanly sacrifice, but they also carry more questionable messages. There are assumptions, if not explicit in images, at least implied by the assemblage of objects used to represent these women, that they were of Anglo-Celtic stock, mothers, wives and hard workers who confined themselves to hearth and home. These stereotypical assumptions obscure the fact that women on the frontier represented different classes, cultures and races and ignore the diversity of lived experiences — from manual labour on the farm, prostitution, droving with the men, to managing a range of commercial activities or living comfortably as wives or mistresses of men of wealth and high social standing.

COLLECTIONS AND DISPLAYS

A second area of concern has been gender bias in collecting policies — a bias evolving out of history, collection management techniques and contemporary societal values.

Legacies of History.

According to the documentary record museums were conceived and begun by men. In the Museum Golden Age of the nineteenth century they collected and exhibited objects to improve the practice of male artisans, and to impress everyone with male creativity and ingenuity. As a result museums have been very masculinist and object-focused until very recently. (Clark, 1992: 6).

Collections in Australian museums had a primary interest in geology and natural history; they gradually incorporated ethnography and the history of science and technology. Social history has been a relative late-comer. Historical collections in museums are dominated by machinery, scientific instruments, weapons, industrial tools,

and militaria, representing the earlier interest in the history of sciences and technology.

Museum collections also reflect the changing preoccupations not only of museums but of the dominant culture; preoccupations with land, progress and technological development, the 'native problem' and war. Thus, items made and used by men predominate. Items made and used by women have been less likely to be collected.

The surge in social history and subsequent concentration on 'history from below' has revealed gaps in the holdings of material culture associated with the working classes and marginalised groups, particularly women's objects. The material culture representing such classes and groups was, and still is, more likely to be worn out during use. Historically, museums have also tended to base their acquisition policies on aesthetic qualities or evidence of technological development. Even today, museums continue to apply a 'conservative tradition of connoisseurship' to artefacts that have strong social history credentials (Winkworth, 1991: 126). Nor have many museums actively researched and provenanced their collections of 'Australiana' (Winkworth, 1991). With women's lives so intimately linked to the material culture of the everyday, it is therefore important that, if the full range of Australian women's lives is to be represented in museums, fresh perspectives need to be developed and new techniques of 'reading the past' adopted to bridge the gaps in collections of artefacts.

Collections Management. Classificatory techniques in museum collecting practices can also be problematic for dealing with representations of women and domestic life. Gaby Porter argued that the prevalent classifications for social and local history museums in the UK are:

hierarchical systems organised around spheres of use, and cutting vertically into activities within each sphere according to their special and distinctive artefacts, tools, skills and products. The domestic sphere is separated from other spheres and in particular is set apart from, in antithesis to, working activity.

As a result,

... It becomes almost impossible to look at the job of house-work as a whole, at the range of tasks done by one person, including shopping and often childcare. Again, all activities within the home are assumed to be for consumption by the family: the classification makes no distinction between paid and unpaid work done at home, and locates productive work clearly outside the home. (Porter, 1988: 111).

An historical undervaluing of the work of women means that household items, women's possessions, machinery used by women, and

jects relating to 'men's work' — augers, mining tools and equipment, farm implements, barbed wire, a gun case, and mineral samples — all utilitarian objects that connote austerity, hard work, ingenuity, and a basic life-style.

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TABLE 2. Employment in Cultural Industries and Museums. (Extrapolated from A.B.S. Work in Selected Culture/Leisure Activities, Australia, March 1993, and unpublished data on Museums).

SURVEY OF CULTURE AND LEISURE 12 MONTHS ENDING MARCH 1993 EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF PERSONS INVOLVED IN CULTURE AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES AND MUSEUMS - AUSTRALIA (^{'000})			
Characteristics	Males	Females	Persons
Museums Sector:			
Employed full time	8.2	3.6	11.8
Employed part time	1.1	3.7	4.8
Total employed	9.3	7.3	16.6

tators. As Table 2 shows, women accounted for only 30% of museum workers in full-time employment but 77% of those in part-time employment. The percentage who chose to work part time is not known.

More indicative figures are available from the Annual Reports of museums, particularly now that major institutions are publishing staff statistics to meet Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) requirements. Selected 1992/93 reports from institutions including these data reveal that, overall, women represent just below 50% in most institutions but below 42% at both the War Memorial and the South Australian Museum. A more critical consideration, however, is the higher numbers of women employed at the lower-paid administrative and clerical grades, and the lower proportions in the higher positions. For example, although the Powerhouse Museum records fairly equitable ratios between men and women at most levels, at the highest administrative level (above Grade 12), the percentage of women falls to 33%. At the Australian Museum only 10% of staff at this grade are women.

A 1983 survey of 609 U.K. museums found that women formed 34% of museum staff but were concentrated in particular areas: in the curatorial area they tended to be found in costume and arts departments, and in other areas of the museum, were concentrated in education, clerical, cleaning and support facilities. Men, on the other hand, dominated the positions of directors, departmental heads, technical and attendant roles. Volunteer staff were predominantly women (Porter, 1988: 105).

The Museums Association in the U.K. has been collecting data and publishing national surveys of British museums since the mid 1980s, including statistics on male/female staff in museums. In 1989, David Prince looked at this data alongside national statistics on women in employment, to

provide a summary picture of the position of women in museums (Prince: 1988). The data reveal that women represent from 12-14% of the total full-time workforce employed in museums whilst men represent 86-88% depending on the type of museum, and, in respect to earnings, male staff dominate the employment profile (Table 3).

CAREER PATHS

Again, quantitative data are slim. What information is available indicates that the museum profession is one where few women have made it to the top. However, there are now several major institutions which have appointed a woman to the position of Director — the National Museum of Australia is headed up by Dr Margaret Coldrake, and at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Patricia Sabine has been appointed Director. Nevertheless, as the organisation charts of major institutions reveal, most senior executive positions are held by men. In part, this pattern can be explained by women's position in society in general and the professions more particularly, the conservative nature of museum administrations, boards of trustees and government departments, as well as the relatively low turnover of staff at such institutions.

Modern business enterprises are increasingly moving toward more flexible working arrangements such as job sharing, flexible working hours, part-time and casual work. Their appeal to women has been well understood and taken advantage of by museum administrations as has been shown by an increasing reliance being placed on volunteer staff. The Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Management Plan of the Australian Museum notes the Museum's support for EEO principles and argues that their implementation has benefits for the institution and individuals with recruitment of the best people, provision of fair and equal treatment and equal opportunity for training and advancement. Objectives include performance appraisal, introduction of enterprise bargaining, and procedures for career enrichment, training and development, grievance resolution, handling multicultural and Aboriginal representation and job opportunities, as well as the establishment of policies on child care and the disabled.

DECISION-MAKING

Museum policies are not only the product of internal processes and decisions, they are also determined by Boards of Trustees, government

ministers and departments — with the latter holding the purse strings!

At the apex of museum structures are the governing Boards or Councils. The Annual Reports of major institutions reveal greater gender equity is being achieved at this level in some institutions. In many small museums it has been claimed that women do the work while men make the decisions and are repaid with recognition or through men's networking systems. However, generalisations are difficult given the diversity of museum structures and differential power relations within various communities. In these important areas of cultural policy there is an obvious need for further research.

NEW DIRECTIONS

The previous section has reviewed the major criticisms that have been made of museums from the point of view of women's civic rights and concerns. Of course, many of these criticisms are now recognised by museums and, although the reality may often lag behind the rhetoric, there are now many instances of more equitable policies being formulated and put into place.

DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN FORMAL INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS

Women in museums have mobilised to address the problems, gaps and silences, and 'glass ceilings' they perceive to exist in these institutions. Feminist scholarship and new 'angles of vision' are being applied to museum operations and their output and the empowerment of women is increasingly a topic of museum discourse. The momentum is spreading globally and Australian museum workers have been to the fore in this campaign.

IN AUSTRALIA:

Women's Section of Museums Association of Australia (MAA). Formed in 1988, the Women's Section has met annually at CAMA/MAA conferences (now Museums Australia Inc.). The Section has established regional groups in all States to act as advocacy and pressure groups and to address issues relating to women in museums on a national basis. Its specific aims are:

- To provide a forum to facilitate communication on a range of issues concerning women in museums;
- To develop programs and initiatives to address these issues;

TABLE 3. Numbers and Proportions of Male and Female Staff Within Defined Salary Bands, 1985 (Source: Museums Data-Base (Original Survey) (1987), Quoted in Prince, 1988: 55-60)

Band (Pounds Stg)	Males %	Females %	Females as % of Total
3000 or less	0.9	4.1	50.9
3000-5000	4.5	11.1	38.0
5001-7000	77.8	59.4	15.5
7001-9000	7.8	12.4	27.7
9001-11000	3.9	7.4	31.6
11001-13000	1.9	3.3	29.3
13001-15000	1.2	0.9	15.1
15001-17000	1.1	0.6	11.7
17001-19000	0.3	0.2	17.2
19001-21000	0.2	0.1	11.8
21000 +	0.4	0.1	7.1

- To act as a lobby group to advance the representation of women in museums; and

- To enhance the profession's understanding of and support for women's issues in museums.

At the 1991 CAMA Conference, the Women's Section adopted a set of resolutions centred around intensifying women's lobbying and advocacy efforts, monitoring employment opportunities for women in museums, establishing and extending a networking system, and developing a feminist critique of museum activities (displays, language, employment etc). The Section is currently planning an occupational audit of women in museums and art galleries.

National Museum of Australia. In 1993 the National Museum of Australia hosted a conference, 'Images of Women', which drew together women (and a handful of men) from museums, politics, universities, the performing arts and other professions. A major objective of the conference was to enable museum professionals to consult with the wider community on how women should be represented in museums. From a series of workshops which discussed topics ranging from multiculturalism and Aboriginality, to career development, sexuality, disabilities, work, sports and leisure and city/country issues, over fifty resolutions were adopted. Among these were recommendations that the National Museum sponsor a working party of representatives from museums, the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia and the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, to develop guidelines for community consultations and networking; that the Council of Australian Museums Associations

develop policies to recommend to their constituent museums which address both gender and ethnicity in collecting, public programs and staffing; that the full spectrum of women's achievements should be represented in the appropriate context; that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women should be involved in decision-making on what should be put in museums; and that a dialogue between sporting bodies and museums be established.

OVERSEAS:

WHAM (Women, Heritage and Museums). This group was formed in the UK in 1984 for women and men who wished to:

- Promote positive images of women through museum collecting, exhibitions and activities;
- Encourage informed museum practice through training seminars, resource lists, etc. in relation to women's contribution to society;
- Publicise museums as places where women's heritage can be studied and enjoyed;
- Provide a wider forum for the exchange of ideas and sharing of information on women's heritage;
- Campaign for equal employment in museums and related fields through changes in work.
- Initiate debate and respond to relevant issues through the press and to professional organisations etc.
- Combat racism and discrimination on grounds of disability, age or sexual orientation, as these issues affect women, whether as museum workers, users or as women represented by museums.

USA. In 1986 the Smithsonian Institution and the Ford Foundation sponsored a national conference, *Women's Changing Roles in Museums*, which looked at the changing roles of women in society and in museums. In 1990, *Gender Perspectives: The Impact of Women on Museums*, was convened at the Smithsonian Institution. Stated objectives of the conference were to: examine women's historical impact on museums; share experiences that show how gender perspectives have a significant effect on museum's scholarly and educational pursuits; identify societal and technological changes in museums that affect women; assess scholarly, educational, and leadership roles for women as museums professionals; and look to museums of the future for the effect of gender perspectives (Glaser & Zenetou, 1994: xxiii).

UNESCO. During 1990 a workshop on Women and Museums was held in Copenhagen, and the following year a special issue of UNESCO's publication, 'Museum', was dedicated to women in museums. From the workshop, the following agreements were adopted as part of a strategy of action:

On the importance of on-going activities for raising the profile and status of women in museums and on the value of maintaining and extending national, regional and international networks.

On the need to build on the constituency of women in museums and museum organisations, including steps to formulate policies for women.

To raise gender awareness among women and men and to stress the need to include women in all public museum programs, and maintain critical awareness of the images presented.

To use the resources of our museums to build collections, to plan, design and show exhibitions, and to provide programs which address women in the arts and sciences as well as women's history, and to give access to museum resources to women outside the museums as well as to those of the staff.

STRATEGIES WITHIN MUSEUMS

There are now many well-documented attempts to find new ways of representing women in museums. But the display activities of museums cannot be separated from other areas of museum work, in particular collections and research policies. Some museums have shown commitment to women's concerns by drawing up policy documents in these areas with specific attention to women's material culture.

Representation. Some curators and display planners are seeking to overcome stereotyping and generic women in displays by

Recovering women's pasts: More representative displays that recover women's pasts are slowly appearing in mainstream museums, partly as a reaction to criticism, and partly brought about and made possible by the changes noted below.

Exploring women's lives: Instead of focussing on typical 'women's work, the finer things in life, or offering nostalgic images of the past that avoid unpleasant, political or mundane aspects of the past, some exhibition planners are attempting to represent the totality of women's experiences.

Individualising displays: Presenting stories about individuals rather than depicting the lives of anonymous, imaginary figures can go a long way to addressing the problem of stereotyping. Turning the historical bias from colonial to more recent periods for which a greater selection of historical material is available, either in the form of artefacts or documentary evidence, may facilitate and encourage more displays of individuals.



FIG. 1. Temporary display, *Thrift*, Pioneer Women's Hut, Tumbarumba, NSW. (Photo courtesy of the Pioneer Women's Hut).

Exploring diversity: New approaches are being made by acknowledging the historical diversity of women's interests from home to work-place, from artistic to entrepreneurial, from child care to the political arena, and by attempting to break down barriers between gendered divisions of labour, creativity and values.

New forms of evidence: The presentation of more individuals or examples of women's lives is being made possible through oral histories, paper-based material (photographs, letters, diaries, written records, journals, accounts), projects between museums, historical groups, libraries and archives, and extending primary research into the community.

Collections, Research, Exhibition Techniques. The nexus between museum displays and museum practices associated with collections acquisition, management, research and interpretation has been noted. Such practices are underpinned by traditional museum principles (the priority of the object, classifying artefacts in terms of their evolutionary development, etc) and interrelated disciplinary theoretical bases. All

these aspects of museums are currently being debated, questioned and challenged — both from within museum structures and in the wider arena.

Feminist perspectives: Feminist critiques of museum practices, accompanied by an increasing feminisation of history departments within museums as women move into curatorial roles, are enabling women's perspectives to be developed, and a greater awareness and sensitivity to be displayed. This can extend from redressing offensive or sexist language in labelling, to re-evaluating collections and mounting displays around women's interests, or including women in more equitable representations and, more importantly, developing policies to redress a masculinist museum culture. One strand of feminism suggests a major contribution women can make to museum work is their non-hierarchical, interactive mode of thinking (Keller, 1985; Tucker, 1994: 45). In a similar vein, Heather Paul has called for museum women to become the 'peripheral visionaries' for museums — those who ask new questions, offer new interpretations and offer a more holistic and lateral way of think-



FIG. 2. Temporary display, *Caring for Clothes*, Pioneer Women's Hut, Tumbarumba, NSW. (Photo courtesy of the Pioneer Women's Hut).

ing in contrast to traditional linear patterns more characteristic of men (Paul, 1994: 124).

Museum Policies: Numerous museums have already put into effect internal policy directives on collections, public programs, research and education that reflect a commitment to improving the representation of women's issues and concerns and the redressing of masculine biases in long-established museum practices. The National Museum has a Women's Collecting Policy, the Museum of Victoria a Collection Policy on Domestic and Community Life whilst the Migration Museum includes gender considerations in all its policy statements. The Museum of Victoria policy notes four main areas of focus: work and living in the home, childhood and nurturing, leisure, and other activities based in local neighbourhoods and communities. This policy has been developed to respond to the need for a new interpretation and understanding of unpaid work (including child birth, child rearing and community work) and other leisure and work experiences (Museum of Victoria History Group Collection Policies).

Critical Culture: A more critical approach is being established among museum workers in respect to both exhibitions and museum practices in general. We now see in museum literature an occasional review of exhibitions for gender content although the level still falls far short of adequate. Internal reviews of museum projects — exhibitions and public programs — for gender equity and cultural diversity are not only being advocated, but put into place in some institutions. In Australia the Migration Museum not only includes gender considerations in general policy but

is still the only museum in Australia to have a specific and explicit policy of reflecting women's history and culture in all exhibitions. It is also the only Australian museum to have adopted a specifically feminist analytical framework in its exhibitions (Anderson, 1993: 7-8).

In the United States, the National Museum of American History, has, as a result of the 1990 national seminar on women in museums, initiated a group to consider gender equity in exhibitions. Its slide program, *Toward Gender Equity in Exhibitions*, deals with ways of expressing women's experiences and aspirations (Glaser & Zenetou,



FIG. 3. Collection of bush quilts, Pioneer Women's Hut, Tumbarumba, NSW. (Photo courtesy of the Pioneer Women's Hut).

1994: xxi). However, as early as 1976, the New York State Museum had established an internal gender equity committee to examine and advise on exhibit themes, linguistics and exhibition design. To ensure gender equity in exhibitions, programs and publications, this advisory group recommended a series of criteria for evaluating the output of the museum (Appendix 1). Although these criteria were framed nearly two decades ago, they are still valid today.

Re-interpretation of Existing Collections: Gender-blindness is not only endemic to the public but may also be found among museum workers, as Barbara Smith recounts. When viewing a display covering the lives of several eighteenth-century individuals which included 'period rooms, furnishings, pots, pans, toys, spinning wheels, costume and jewellery, artisan tools, and ceramic wares', she commented that the exhibit lacked attention to women's history and was told this was because there were no artefacts available pertaining to women! (Smith, 1994: 141). This incident illustrates the need for re-interpreting existing collections from a women's perspective. Such re-interpretation is, of course,

dependent on further, women's oriented, research. In this spirit, both the Museum of Victoria and the Powerhouse Museum have been reassessing their historical collections of domestic technology in order to find new ways of interpreting these objects so as to more adequately reflect women's history.

Inclusive or Separatist Approach? The concept of gender-specific museums is a product of the women's movement and has generated debates about the wisdom of a separatist approach compared to equal representation within existing museums. Some argue there is a danger that women's invisibility will only be further entrenched with an inclusive approach. Others argue that equality of representation can only be achieved when men and women are shown interacting together in museum displays. Another argument against gender-specific museums is that they tend to create ghettos. On the other hand, it is also claimed that women's museums enhance consciousness raising, instil self-esteem and keep women's museum concerns on the agenda until a better gender balance can be achieved in



FIG. 4. Selection of the display *Never Done*, Pioneer Women's Hut, Tumbarumba, NSW. (Photo courtesy of the Pioneer Women's Hut).

mainstream and traditional museums (Skjoth, 1991: 125). Gender-specific museums are, however, few and far between. Museum (1991) listed nine women's museums in Denmark, Ecuador, France, Germany (2), Greece, and the United States (3). Some of the women's museums, including an Australian project, the Pioneer Women's Hut at Tumbarumba, are discussed below.

CASE STUDIES

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUMS

WOMEN'S MUSEUMS

Women's Hut. Tumbarumba, NSW. This was the first museum in Australia devoted to women's interests. The small community-run museum is situated at Glenroy, about 8 km from Tumbarumba in southern New South Wales. In 1988 it won national acclaim in the Bicentennial Museum of the Year awards as an 'outstanding small museum in which research and collections combine well to provide a fascinating picture of the lives and

skills of rural women in Australia' (Women's Hut promotional material). From an expectation that the Hut's collection would include 'important' objects, several local women decided to take another direction. This resulted in a policy to build a picture of ordinary rural life and so raise the self-esteem of women by depicting their everyday lives as parts of Australian history. Strategies to achieve this include:

- ... concentrating on ordinary objects, and researching everyday lives of rural women;

- ... encouraging local women and their families to retain objects relating to their own heritage by handing on their past to their children and making it relevant to their lives;

- ... creating links with young rural women (town and country) so that they become aware of the significance of their personal history and that of their families, and to show that history isn't exclusive to the rich and famous. (The Women's Hut — Aims).

Since opening in 1985, the Women's Hut has built a collection of about 1600 objects, published 3 books on the histories of local women, and provided simple conservation advice and encouragement to people to retain artefacts. In the ever deepening rural crisis, museum organisers



FIG. 5. The 1920s kitchen in the ... *never done* exhibition, The Powerhouse Museum, Sydney. (Photo courtesy of The Powerhouse Museum).

perceive an integral and ongoing role for the museum:

Small country towns are isolated, the second family car has gone, there is very little work and few of the support services for the unemployed found in cities and major rural centres. Probably the majority of country women no longer make butter, bake bread or even bottle fruit so this domestic framework that often provided status for women is also no longer there. Self esteem of young women is often at an all time low. We are not primarily looking to direct involvement by young women in the pioneer Women's Hut but rather to community based projects with an Australian, local and personal history underlay. (Pioneer Women's Hut History, Aims and Implementation — personal correspondence).

Exhibition space in the Women's Hut is allocated to various aspects of women's domestic lives: Keeping Warm, Coping with Flies, Caring for Clothes, and Time for Fancywork. These displays reflect the Museum's commitment to documenting the rural experience and totality of women's lives. (Figs 1-4).

National Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame. Late in 1994 this museum opened in its temporary home, the former Alice Springs courthouse. The museum commemorates women who are

pioneers in their fields (domestic, occupation, rural and urban). Its long term objectives are: to establish a public museum and art gallery to pay tribute to pioneer women; to assemble, exhibit and preserve a collection of pioneer women's relics, antiques, artefacts and memorabilia; to develop a research library of pioneer women's literature, historical records and manuscripts; to promote knowledge and understanding by the Australian community of the roles of pioneer women; and to foster research into the roles played by Australian pioneer women.

Women's Place. Brisbane. Only a concept at this stage, the objective is to establish a national centre dedicated to celebrating women's place in the building of Australia. Using a grant from the National Agenda for Women, the group has already compiled a data base on Queensland women's history which it has lodged with the John Oxley Library, Brisbane.

EXHIBITIONS AT GENERAL MUSEUMS

Just Housewives and Mothers. (1989/90). This was a temporary display at the Albert Park Branch



FIG. 6. Temporary display, *Women of the West*, Queensland Museum, Brisbane. (Photo courtesy of the Queensland Museum).

of the South Melbourne Library produced by staff of the Museum of Victoria and students of La Trobe University. The project was based on an oral history project about women's domestic and community lives in South Melbourne.

Never Done. Women's Work in the Home. (1988-), Powerhouse Museum. This was one of the first major permanent exhibitions in Australian museums to take a women's perspective. Built on the museum's collection of domestic technology, the display examines the history of domestic work in Australia around the themes of sewing, cooking, baking and laundry work. It is 'an engaging, thoughtful exhibition which appears to be popular with its audience. It treats women's history and domestic history seriously and gives modern women the chance to reflect on their own daily routines in the light of past experience' (Anderson, 1993). An interesting contrast is made between pioneering housework in a bush hut and that of the 1920s with one section devoted to washday in the 1800s and another section featuring a 1920s suburban kitchen. However, underlying the theme of 'never done' are messages, consistent with the

philosophy of the institution, of technological progress. These are evident not only in the organisation of contrasts but explicitly portrayed on the black and white television program displayed in the 1950s kitchen. This runs a continuous program showing advertisements for new domestic technologies that will make housework 'easier' than in the past. (Fig. 5).

Trust the Women — Women in the Federal Parliament. Parliament House, Canberra. Through paintings, photographs, artefacts, letters and documents, this exhibition charts the work and achievements of women in the Federal Parliament. The exhibition covers two themes — women's right to vote and the election of women parliamentarians — by exploring the Suffragette movement, the late entry of women into parliament, and the peaking of the women's movement in the 1970s. The focus of the exhibition is on the work of women's groups, and the social and geographical factors that have impeded women's march towards full political expression and participation. A centrepiece of the display is Dora Mceson's 'Trust the Women' Women's Suffrage



FIG. 7. Temporary display, *Women of the West*, Queensland Museum, Brisbane. (Photo courtesy of the Queensland Museum).

Banner of 1908. (Exhibition Catalogue; Young, 1992: 7-8).

On the Go — Women Adventurers from the '20s and 30s. (1993), Tasmanian Museum, Hobart and Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston. This was a joint project with the National Museum of Australia. The display celebrated women's contributions to bushwalking in Tasmania. It recorded women who joined the movement, adapted men's walking gear before specific bushwalking and camping wear became available, pioneered new routes, led trips and made their mark overseas in Europe and New Zealand. The collection has now been transferred to the National Museum as part of that institution's project to collect materials revealing the diversity of women's lives in Australia.

Mum Stayed Home. (Touring exhibition by Women's Hut/Albury Regional Museum/Albury Regional Art Centre). This exhibition about 'ordinary Mums' who lived and raised families in Australia during the 1950s provided more than a nostalgic trip into the past. Using artefacts and art works, the exhibition told about the lives of four women from different socio-economic back-

grounds — Els Jacobs who migrated from Holland during the 1950s, Euphemia Mullett who spent the 1950s living in bush camps, Norma McQualter from a typical middle-class background and Patricia Parker who came from a working-class family and who, throughout her life and work, was closely involved with political groups. Through the lives of these women the display looked at images of mums created by the media and explored broader issues about Motherhood, Wonder Mums, Art and Decoration and, as Sharon Veale has commented, through revealing the experiences of these women the exhibition was partly able to counteract the characteristic assessments of the fifties as a period of consumption, modernity and relative affluence. (Exhibition brochure, Northey: 1992, Veale, 1994: 18).

The Glory Box — A Chest Full of Hopes and Dreams. (1992), Lilydale Museum. In an exhibition based on oral histories, personalised stories about glory boxes were used to explore gender roles, social structures and attitudes, and marital experiences in Australia during the 1930s and 1940s. Exhibition planners found

As the women's stories began to take pride of place so did their domestic objects. Doilies, tablecloths and



FIG. 8. *Women Aviators*, Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre, Longreach. (Photo courtesy of the Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage).

pillowcases spoke of skills learned, of patience, dreams and expectations. (McFadzean, 1992: 8).

Although the exhibition was a local community project which drew on the experiences of residents of the region, it used these to explore the selectivity of history and to make statements about Australian society in general.

Fair Game: The Cultural Connections of Sport in South Australia. (1992-1993), Migration Museum, SA. This display depicted the history of sport and included women's involvement in, and exclusion from, sport as well as showing contemporary attitudes, roles and participation of women in sporting events and their roles as 'washers of sports gear, brewers of tea and bakers of cakes' and as spectators (Anderson, 1993).

Strictly Black. (1989), Migration Museum, SA. The topic of this costume display was the connection between dress, gender and culture. The display drew out some of the contradictory attitudes that exist about women through the vehicle of dress and 'challenged its audience to consider the multiple uses of dress in society, as sign and

symbol as well as functional item' (Anderson, 1993: 124).

Votes for women 1894-1928, and *The Decade for Women*. (1981) and (1985), South Australian Constitutional Museum (now Old Parliament House, SA). The first exhibition covered the campaign for women's suffrage in South Australia and the United Kingdom, and the second featured the activities of non-government women's organisations from 1975 to 1985.

Women and the Humanities. (1986), National Library of Australia. A small display including items from the Anne Summers women's liberation collections, some items relating to women involved in Australian politics (Dame Enid Lyons, Vida Goldstein, Adele Pankhurst Walsh etc) and other material related to birth control, equal pay and conscription.

Women of Worth. Jewish Museum of Victoria. This exhibition on women and Judaism, explored concepts of womanhood in different traditions, including topics of marriage, sexuality and contradictions between traditional and modern concepts and impact on Jewish culture. Lectures,

symposium and performance activities were held in conjunction with this exhibition.

Jewish Women in History. A.M. Rosenblum, Jewish Museum of the Great Synagogue, Sydney. A small exhibition which has toured to several locations focused on particular women in Jewish history and depicting Jewish communities from women's perspectives. Different historical periods were represented — Biblical, Spanish Inquisition, German Enlightenment, nineteenth century Australia, an Eastern Europe village pre World War II and contemporary.

Ellis Rowan: A Flower Painter in Queensland. (1989), Queensland Museum. The exhibition of Ellis Rowan's paintings also covered her life and travels and revealed the character and personality of this strong-minded woman who, until recently, has been ignored by historians. The exhibition toured Australia.

Women of the West. (1995), Queensland Museum. This temporary (3-5 years) and touring exhibition deals with the interaction between women and the 'west' (the environment and society of rural districts and country towns) and explores this relationship through objects and photographs evocative of the range of women's experiences in 'the bush'. The exhibition explores the propositions that 'the west' is both a place and a state of mind; that there is a difference between the understanding and perception of 'the west' generated within the area itself and the understanding and perceptions imposed and interpreted from 'outside'; and that regional factors are important in defining women's experiences. (Figs 6-7).

Women Aviators. Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre. The display honours those women who became heroes of the air. In doing so it also compliments contiguous displays — those devoted to pioneers (male) who have helped to modernise the outback and those featuring technologies that are changing the work and leisure patterns of rural life. *Women Aviators* is a small display that tends to be obscured by the crush of display panels, models and audio visual terminals located on the upper level of the exhibition hall. However, its inclusion does suggest that efforts are being made to increase the visibility of women in the Hall's display spaces. (Fig. 8).

Absence of Evidence. (June 1994), Fremantle Prison. The project brought together visual artists, performers and writers in a collaborative research project to produce a 6-week long event that combined exhibition, performances, read-

ings and a 1-day seminar. The project was directed at investigating the lives of women in two historical sites — the Lunatic Asylum (and later Old Women's Home) and the Female Division of the Fremantle Prison (now an Arts Centre and tourist site). Its more specific aims were to re-inscribe the absent spaces of these two sites; to engage in an imaginative reconstruction of personal histories in such a way as to explore the limits of the art exhibition as well as the constraints of object-based museum displays, and to explore how these places of incarceration were not just sites of repression but of the production of dominant social norms.

Women in Prison. (forthcoming), Fremantle Prison. An exhibition on women in prison will be developed as part of a research project funded by a West Australian History Foundation grant. The project will focus on the Female Division at Fremantle Prison and will target oral history and archival records. It will examine the premise that prison has been a primary site for the separation of the 'masculine' and the 'feminine', particularly through the interaction of space and people in the everyday routines of prison life.

Keeping Culture Strong: Women's Work in Aboriginal Australia. (1992), Museum of Victoria. This was the Museum's first exhibition on Aboriginal women. Its aim was to demonstrate the vitality and diversity of Aboriginal women's culture. The exhibition concentrated on three regions: South Eastern, Central and Northern Australia and drew on the Museum's extensive collections of both contemporary and historic items from these areas. Koorie women from various groups worked with the museum project team and community consultation and co-operative efforts were involved in exhibition design, access to archives and resource material (videos and oral history material from Aboriginal groups). Special activities — craft demonstrations, films, and lectures by Aboriginal women — further enabled indigenous viewpoints to be expressed, as did the use of first person quotes in many of the display labels.

Daughters of the Dreaming. (1989), Museum of Victoria. This photographic exhibition was initiated by a Koorie artist, Mrs Valmai Heap, and developed with the Victorian Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Unit and staff of the Museum of Victoria. Based on the Museum's photographic collections and videos developed in consultation with Aboriginal women in the community, the project was designed to create awareness and

understanding of Aboriginal cultural heritage issues, especially those relating to Aboriginal women, and to highlight the importance of photographs in recording the lives of Aboriginal people. This exhibition later toured Aboriginal communities throughout Victoria and travelled interstate.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS, OUTREACH ACTIVITIES, RESEARCH PROJECTS ETC.

The Museum of Victoria has initiated several projects that relate specifically to women's concerns — the projects developed by the Museum's Aboriginal Studies Department already noted, collecting and research in the area of domestic technology and the work of Lisa Dale which looks at women in agriculture. The Museum has produced an Education kit on *Work in the Home* for distribution to senior school students. As part of this oral history project an extensive program of talks to community groups and students was conducted around the theme which also linked into Senior Citizens Week, Heritage Festival and a workshop for the Victorian Home Economics and Textile Teachers Association Biennial Conference.

Powerhouse (Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences). Accompanying the display *Never Done*, is an Exhibition brochure, an educational 'teachers visit pack' of exhibition notes and activity sheets for the same display. Hands on activities for organised school groups are also available.

Also in production is a catalogue of the museum's domestic technology collection, one of Australia's most comprehensive in the area. Planners hope to avoid problems inherent in traditional history classification systems and to focus on domestic labour (paid and unpaid), and on domestic life, to analyse the museum's collection of material culture of domestic work, (Stephen & Webber, 1990).

National Museum of Australia. Although still in its 'gestation' stage, the Museum has written a collecting policy for women's history and culture articulating feminist views to ensure that the Museum's collections 'fully document women's lives'. It has also set up a Women's Project encouraging women to donate objects to enable the Museum to document the experiences of all women. Some specific activities under this program include field work in communities in Groote Eylandt and Utopia (NT) to purchase documented collections focusing on contact history and women's history; acquisition of the

Myrtle Wilson collection of needlework; documenting the lives of Australian women scientists and locating them within the wider contexts of their societies; and recording women's experiences in bushwalking and outdoor recreation. This latter project intends to build collections of objects and oral histories that interpret the changing roles of women in these areas; and to identify the connections between women's outdoor recreation and participation in the conservation lobby, nature and scientific study and naming of places.

The National Maritime Museum. Mary-Louise Williams writes that

Almost without exception, the staff at the Museum work to challenge the view that maritime museums appeal only to men (Williams, 1990: 38).

Despite a strong emphasis on naval and boating matters, the sections devoted to Passengers and Leisure provide opportunities for inclusive displays in the sub-themes of migration, pleasure cruising, beach life, swimwear etc; whilst in the USA-Australia Gallery a display on War brides makes available the voices of different women through oral and video histories and personal ephemera, (Witcomb, 1993).

OVERSEAS MUSEUMS

A review of articles on women in museums around the world suggests a varied agenda, ranging from the maintenance of traditional practices to revolutionary programs and nationalising strategies. Likewise, women's involvement appears to vary from country to country. In the Soviet Union in museums of all sizes and levels and types the majority of museum staff are reportedly women. More surprisingly, women also outnumber men in professional categories and are well represented at director levels. In contrast, a report on Japanese museums indicates only 0.4% of directors are women with as few as 20% of museum professionals being women. Yet women account for nearly 80% of the volunteer staff in Japanese museums.

An account of German museums by Titus Grab, an ethnographer concerned with gender-roles in museums, documents changes brought about by the women's movement since the late 1970s. These he identifies as an awareness that museums are vehicles of both 'anthropocentric traditions' as well as potential media for articulating critical debate, documenting women's history, and creating feminist infrastructures. As a consequence, gender-related initiatives had increased in museums (mostly in temporary exhibitions and

displays) by the mid 1980s, although Grab maintains that German museums still reflect gender-specific divisions of labour with women in 'lower' jobs and men involved with the 'high art', (Grab, 1991: 136-139).

Julia Clark, convenor of the Women's Section of the M.A.A., visited British museums during 1989 and reported:

In 14 weeks in Britain, in which I visited over 100 museums, I found only two exhibitions which gave centre stage to 'girls' stuff. A few made a real effort, but were easily eclipsed by the context of the display and/or institution which were essentially masculinist. This was particularly marked in the north, in the major new museums which had received big slabs of Mrs Thatcher's Urban Renewal funding. Since these were generally post-industrial sites in manufacturing or port towns, they focused on industry and technology in the narrowest sense, that is machines and methods. Women's experience was either absent or peripheral. (Clark, 1992).

Clark went on to describe several exhibitions which did acknowledge women. First, although the major displays of engines, turbines etc. at the new Science and Technology Museum at Manchester ignored women, there was a small space set apart from the main exhibits which housed an 'excellent and innovative' display, 'The Story of Manchester', which recognised the contributions of men and women to the life of the city. She located two other major touring exhibitions on women's work and lives. These were *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery in women's lives 1300-1900*, and *Women and Textiles Today*. The first explored the social, cultural and economic contexts of embroidery to illustrate the development of a hierarchical value system and gendered division of labour in the arts and the latter exhibition continued these themes into the twentieth century (Clark, 1991:135).

Barbara Melosh concluded her review of women's history in various exhibits in the United States during the 1980s as follows:

... These exhibits embody a sensitivity to gender and recognition of female aspiration that illustrate the wide response to at least some feminist claims. At the same time, a pattern of significant omissions reveals a kind of selectivity that amounts to censorship. No Orwellian Ministry of Culture looms over curators; nor do directors and boards commonly issue fiat about what is allowed and what is forbidden. Nevertheless, though few curators would wish to acknowledge it openly, most of us operate under a tacit, perhaps sometimes even unconscious, sense of limits on what can be said. Seldom couched in explicitly political terms, not necessarily ideological in their intentions, these restrictions are nonetheless political in their effects. They find expression in what one might call the language of the museum, the characteristic discourse and modes of representation associated with exhibits. (Melosh, 1989: 204-5).

According to Melosh, the way this 'censorship' works is through: 1, elisions in representations (the avoidance of women's bodies and sexual conflict); 2, a 'tyranny of the happy ending', and an 'implicit code of civility [that] powerfully shapes the content and tone of exhibits' and sets the limits of acceptable dissent; 3, a linguistic style that delimits intellectual interpretation in narrow terms and addresses audiences from a paternalistic interpretation of a museum's public role that is disembodied, authoritative, concealed and results in a 'voice' that conceals historical agency.

One strategy for avoiding such 'hidden' censorship is to assess all exhibitions for gender balance. Another strategy to overcome invisibility is the gender-specific museum, or women's museum.

A few brief details on some of these museums indicate a variety of differing agenda — sometimes celebratory, sometimes directed at changing their immediate society — but all seeing a need for a separate institution to meet women's specific needs.

Kvindemuseet i Danmark (The Women's Museum), Aarhus, Denmark. In discussing the museum's first exhibition, *Give Room for Life* (1984), Mogensen describes this as a museum which attempts to

eliminate completely the distance between visitor and exhibition theme. Life-size dolls and custodians dressed to be part of the exhibition recreate a real-life atmosphere. Visiting the Women's Museum was like walking into a private home, where you are allowed to satisfy your curiosity by going through everything; you are not a mere spectator, but a 'true' guest visiting your grandmother's, your mother's or your own youth. (Mogensen, 1988: 23).

The Museum seeks to make women's life and work 'visible and living' by communicating results from research done in women's studies to a wider audience; encouraging women to tell their own stories; and providing opportunities for paid or voluntary work. Apart from displays, the museum has an educational program that includes courses in museum studies, speech technique, drawing, singing, and women's life (present and past). In a region of high female unemployment, the museum sees itself as creating jobs, developing new skills and using old ones. It sees itself as an active agent and focal point whose 'documentation of the past can be used as a means both of reorienting attitudes and behaviour and pointing out different choices for the present and future' (Sandahl, 1991: 172). Jette Sandahl, curator of the museum, claims that, since opening, the museum has contributed to increasing the

visibility of women's history and culture in power structures and the general public; it has reached new audiences; and has become a source of inspiration to women (Sandahl, 1991: 175).

Fraun-Museum, Wiesbaden, Germany. Founded in 1984 and sponsored by the Women's Workshop Centre for Communication and Education, its focal points are women in the history of Wiesbaden and women as the carriers of culture. The exhibition philosophy is not to show women in their different situations of life as objects and observation items but to enable each woman visiting the museum to participate 'as active subject of her own history'. Visitors can touch and handle objects, change exhibitions, or add items they find helpful to understanding their own and other women's lives. A range of activities enhance and expand on exhibition strategies: seminars and excursions, guided tours, lectures, as well as research and archive facilities. The Women's Museum attempts to document political, societal and socio-cultural changes, as well as to influence these changes through the activities of the museum.

The Women's Heritage Museum, Palo Alto, California, USA. The museum was founded in 1985 and has operated as a 'museum-without-walls'. It aims 'to move women's history out of universities and into the public consciousness' and its guiding principles are listed as:

- To redefine history to incorporate women's perspectives and contributions;
- To portray history with equal emphasis on persons of all races, creeds, cultures, and social and economic status;
- To identify and make known women role models;
- To employ at all times the highest standard of historical and environmental integrity;
- To enhance the understanding of topics by using a comparative approach.

The Cumbe Women's Museum, Cuenca, Ecuador. The Casa Cumbe Museum grew out of a project for training rural women that included sewing and cooking classes and collective production, and was an initiative of the women themselves. Learning adobe construction to repair the museum building was one of their first projects. Drawing on community museums as a model, the Equadorian women planned their exhibition around 'Our People' with items of value to the women involved. Since then the women have developed micro-enterprises out of the museum project: doll production, raising guinea-pigs, and bread-making. Through their involvement in the museum's development, the lives of the women have changed.

Before Casa Cumbe, the women were very shy: now they will look you in the eye without flinching.

Before, the only social contact for the women of Cumbe was when others dropped in on them at home, now they get together with other women at the museum, they have time to talk, to discuss problems and to solve them together.

Before, some of the women did not have their own businesses; now, with what they have learned and thanks to Casa Cumbe's projects, they have a little income.

Before, the women lacked confidence in financial matters; now they are learning the rudiments of money management.

Before, not many people discussed health and nutrition; now Casa Cumbe invites specialists to talk with the women about these questions.

Before, the women undervalued themselves; now they know that they are equal to men.

Before, they would look down on their traditional crafts and knowledge (which just came naturally, being learned from their mothers); now they know that traditional work (spinning, dying etc) is important because it is part of their history.

Finally, the women of Casa Cumbe now know that there are people who care about them. (de Parra, 1991:169)

American National Women's Hall of Fame, Seneca Falls, New York.

Conceived in 1968 and opened in 1979, in the birthplace of the women's movement, the hall celebrates the achievements of notable women — such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lucy Stone (women's rights advocate), Barbara McClintock (geneticist) etc. For many women, the American National Women's Hall of Fame may be outdated in its celebratory philosophy, yet it is a unique site that recognises and valorises the activities of women. (Melosh, 1989:188).

These accounts highlight the fact that successful museum operations are those that meet the differentiated needs of their respective communities. Strategies for improving the status of women obviously differ depending on the particular society. As Wendy Hucker of the Pioneer Women's Hut, has written, their museum has shown local farming families, particularly women, that history relates to them and not only to the famous, the rich, men and city people. This museum's aim to be a resource 'for women and about women' and to build interactive links with rural women, especially young women, can be as radicalising for Australian country towns as is the development of living skills for Equadorian women.

CONCLUSION

The Australian programs listed above represent only a fraction of museum programs around the country. Most are temporary, or take small spaces in large institutions and, as Anderson has argued,

... they scarcely impinge on the overall message of the museum, which continues to be directed to an imagined male audience', (Anderson, 1993: 129).

Even in those museums with female staff committed to raising the profile of women in museums, women may remain 'marginal'.

As the foregoing discussion also illustrates, many museums are looking at ways of responding to charges that they have ignored women's history and women's contributions to cultural, economic and intellectual developments. But much remains to be done. This section looks at ways in which progressive policies already being developed and adopted can be enhanced but, at the same time, acknowledging that changing attitudes within museums rely on a transformation of gender relations outside museums. Museums can take up pro-active positions and begin to lead societal attitudes rather than following tradition. For this, more practical support from those government departments involved with cultural affairs and with employment practices would be fruitful. The structure of museums in Australia suggests a government-driven approach to change is both viable and desirable.

NEED FOR MORE WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

The boards or councils of several of our national/state museums are working toward more equitable gender balances and several women have been appointed as chairpersons.

With decision-making occurring within a matrix of administrative processes, there is a need for not only gender balance within and outside institutions, but for a gender balance of power at all levels. In addition, and most importantly, both museums and their boards or councils are subject to constraints from government bodies, particularly through funding and staffing levels.

However, having women in decision-making positions or positions of power within museums does not necessarily ensure women's interests are placed on the institutional agenda or, if so, that they are given a high priority. Professional, political, and financial concerns can, and usually do, take priority. At the same time, concepts of objectivity and neutrality and attempts to avoid gender discrimination can act to mask under-representation and the invisibility of women.

Numerous critics have noted the importance of feminist frameworks for informing museum policies and practices and the need for a transformation of social attitudes. As Linda Young has said: 'The devaluing of women is an expression of sexism in society, and our entire cultural environment will have to change before there is gender justice in museum operations and representations' (Young, 1990: 33). But waiting for this transformation should not deter museums from taking a more positive role in effecting social change. Robert Sullivan has argued that museums should become 'moral educators' in the areas of gender and race equity:

As educational institutions, we are necessarily agents of change, not only changing the knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings of our individual visitors but also affecting the moral ecology of the communities that we serve. The pattern of our decision-making in our governance policies, hiring practices, and collection and interpretation programs sends value-laden messages to our communities about what we consider to be worthwhile and just. (Sullivan, 1994: 100).

POLICIES AND RESOURCES TO EFFECT CULTURAL CHANGE

There is a need for policy commitments by all museums to address gender issues in all their areas of activity and for such commitments to be written into policy documents and thence available for auditing and evaluation (Anderson, 1993: 22).

In this respect, the report of the Queensland Museum Policy Review recommended that the Queensland Museum provide an annual women's budget statement which would identify for every significant budget item its gender effects and assess whether it were neutral or biased towards one gender rather than another. For example, a display which attracts more women than men would have a female gender bias; an educational outreach program which serves disciplines in which more males are enrolled would have a male gender bias. Although this recommendation has not been put into effect, the Queensland Museum has taken an innovative approach in appointing an Advisory Committee on Women's Issues. It will be the responsibility of this committee to advise the Board on matters relevant to the collection, conservation and display of items reflecting the interests and achievements of women, particularly Queensland women.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

To advance women's interests it is important to develop a broad approach that will provide access to knowledge for lay people and non-academics,

enabling them to produce knowledge about themselves. Contemporary cultural debates from the National Centre for Australian Studies and its Ideas for Australia program have focussed on 'unlocking the academies' and creating a freer flow of ideas in public intellectual life in Australia. From a series of forums and discussion papers the program has fostered wide public debate in the humanities, natural and social sciences, arts and museums, encouraging a diversity and difference of opinion to ensure Australia remains 'a prosperous, liberal democratic and lively society' (Resolution from the National Ideas Summit, Canberra, 1991). Importantly, the Ideas for Australia committee, and contributors to these forums, workshops and discussion papers represent some of our most noted commentators and critiques of 'conventional wisdoms'. What is surprising, and disappointing, is that the discussion paper, *Museums: An Argument with their own Society*, glosses over the issue of women and museums except for brief reference to the Pioneer Women's Hut.

It is critical that intellectual and cultural developments in these areas are not ignored by feminist strategists. There is a need to develop more extensive and close links between the research efforts in academia, independent research bodies, policy makers, collecting institutions and the public. The proposed Foundation for Australian Cultural Development may be a potential area for furthering the interests of women in museums. However, Commonwealth Government delays and prevarications mean this is still an unknown quantity.

Through these organisations and those directly involved with museums — Museums Australia and its associated organisations and interest groups, including the Women's Section — further strategies for developing more participatory programs might include:

- 1, Developing closer relationships between tertiary institutions, women's research areas and museums. Museums, with their collections of material culture and primary documentation, are well placed to initiate research projects with other institutions involved in women's studies. Specific ways this might be achieved could involve: establishing networking activities that cross academic and museum divides and incorporate women from the community; developing frameworks and guidance for women to conduct their own research, produce their own histories, and have input into exhibition projects; and setting up joint-venture projects with community groups to

research and collect in the area of women's culture/s;

- 2, 'Feminising' the tertiary curriculum. Although Women's Studies programs are now available on many campuses, there is an argument for all tertiary students to acquire a basic understanding of women's issues across disciplinary fields, including museum studies;

- 3, Inclusion of museology as a tertiary subject. The offering of a general museology unit in all tertiary institutions (particularly within women's studies courses) would not only encourage more tertiary students from diverse disciplines (from sciences to humanities) to take up museum careers, but would develop 'greater museum literacy in the community at large' (Galla, 1993); and

- 4, Research based displays. The output of academic research on women's issues provides fertile sources for museums displays and frameworks for collecting activities. Also required is more in-depth research of women's material culture such as Ann Delroy's examination of gas utility distribution in Perth from 1900 to 1950 and its relationship to class (Delroy, 1991-1992) and Kimberley Webber's discussion of the social construction of the sewing machine in Australian domestic history (Webber, 1991-1992).

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Whilst acknowledging the importance of academic work to museums, there are other windows of opportunity. History and cultural knowledges are not the prerogative of academics. They reside in specific communities where it is frequently the women who are the 'culture bearers' and 'culture brokers'. Encouraging a more democratic participation of women in museums could be achieved by:

- 1, Bringing women into museums by increased networking with women's groups, community and ethnic groups with special focus on women's interests;

- 2, Initiating research projects that go out into the community and make links with individuals and groups through oral history programs, co-operative programs with outside bodies, collecting and borrowing objects on a loan basis from individuals, schools and social groups;

- 3, Presenting public programs that speak directly to women, and demonstrate the value of women's work (in the home, workplace) their public roles and their private contributions to society, community, family; and

4, Providing Access galleries. The Migration Museum's Forum (discussed in more detail in Chapter 5) has provided a model in this area and, since its opening in 1987, has hosted a number of exhibitions specifically addressing women's interests, i.e., *Ukrainian Embroidery in South Australia* (1988), Ukrainian Women's Association Inc.; *What Choice Have we Got? Migrant Women and Outwork* (1990), Working Women's Centre; *Greek Handicraft Traditions: The Personal Treasures of Adelaide's Greek Women* (1991), The Greek Women's Handicraft Co-operative; *Lace: The Labour and the Luxury* (1987); *Strictly Black* (1989); *Fair Game: The Cultural Connections of Sport in South Australia*; and *Chinese Embroidery* (1987).

THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENTS

For too long governments — Federal and State — have avoided the issue of museums and women even though they are starting to address women's issues in other areas. Some of the factors in this neglect have already been covered, but a further explanation lies in governments failing to recognise the economic contributions museums make to the economy. The Cultural Ministers Council's Statistical Advisory Group (SAG) has estimated that museums employed nearly 7,000 people during 1988 whilst the value of services within the museum and art museum sector (including zoological and marine parks and botanical gardens) amounted to \$260 million (SAG estimates). The same source estimated visits to museums during 1990/91 totalled approximately 9.7 million (Australian Commission for the Future, 1992: 81-82). These economic benefits of museums could be further enhanced according to a recent report, *A Framework for Improving Viability in Selected Sectors of the Cultural Industry* which identified new markets for Australian museums to exploit. In the export area, this report noted a growing Asian market for conservation and curatorial skills and services. On the domestic scene, Australian museums were urged to take advantage of the cultural tourism phenomenon by developing museum products geared to tourist markets such as specialised cultural tour products. Concurrent with, and partly as a result of these findings, cultural planning has now become an agenda item for all tiers of government (Australian Commission for the Future, 1992: 82-87).

Given this level of interest in cultural activities, government inquiries and reviews of their cultural 'flagships', and an increasing popular usage

of museums as well as an unprecedented academic and professional interest in museums, it is timely for governments to take some direct action and ensure women's interests are advanced in museums both in cultural and economic spheres.

As Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) takes responsibility for aboriginal affairs, and the Office of Multicultural Affairs looks after and attempts to ensure the needs of multicultural communities are met, some more positive policies that address the issue of women and museums are called for from the Office for the Status of Women. Strategies need to be set in place to encourage better interface between the Office for the Status of Women, the Heritage branch of the Department of Communications and Arts and museums; and for their equivalents at State level to play an agenda-setting role in effecting new relationships between museums and women, both in respect to representational matters and equal employment opportunities. It is a question of accountability but accountability is a two-way process. Changes required of museums and systems of accountability to both government and communities is one way of ensuring the transformations required. But governments too are accountable to the community for providing adequate resources for public institutions. Museums need resource support from governments and government agencies. Therefore performance indicators that measure the rate of change can be linked to funding, and mutually agreed progressive development programs established to achieve specified goals.

GUIDE TO KEY SOURCES

ANDERSON, Margaret 1993. Engendering public culture: women and museums in Australia. This was the background paper for the 'Images of Women Conference', Canberra, 1993. It provides an overview of the history of museums in relation to women's interests and comments on various exhibitions that have explored women's culture.

BICKFORD, Anne 1987. Calthorpe's House Museum Guide. This guide to the historic Canberra house is based on an interpretation that takes up themes of domestic life and the home as a workplace.

CLARK, Julia 1992. 'Girls stuff?: gender in interpretation.' Clark contests the claim that women's business, or girls' stuff, is only of concern to women. She argues that museums are

involved in constructing gendered images that ignore the changing roles of men and women in real society and asserts the need for women to have equal access to the making of meaning.

GLASER, Jane R. & ZENETOU, Artemis A. (eds) 1994. 'Gender Perspectives: Essays on Women in Museums. Thirty five contributors reflect a cross section of female and male perspectives on feminist issues in museums by exploring museum scholarship, exhibitions, research and education programs. A strength of many of the articles is the application of feminist theory to museum practices. Also stimulating are those papers on women and the sciences — a topic not well covered in the literature to date. Contributions are divided into historical perspectives, impacts of feminist scholarship on the disciplines and across museum collections, exhibitions and publications. A further section covers feminist initiatives in ethnic museums, children's museums and science and technology centres. A section on gender perspectives on museums as educational institutions is followed with articles concerned with how museums, and women, will handle their futures.

HOWE, Renate (ed.), 1993. 'Women and the state: Australian perspectives'. Papers from a conference on 'Women and the State' and deals with women's roles in the modern state, the gendered nature of citizenship, the impact of specific ideologies about women, and their relationships to theories of state. Many of these debates provide the background against which questions about the relationship between museums and women may be raised and analysed.

LAKE, Marilyn 1991. *Historical homes*. Lake discusses historical house museums and argues that the process of registration has only served to preserve women's historical invisibility.

MAYNARD, Margaret 1992. *Terrace gowns and shearer's boots: Rethinking dress and the public collection*. Maynard argues that collecting strategies which prioritise minority fashions of the elite and categorise traditional women's attire as 'decorative' further entrench images of woman as ornamental and ineffectual. She advocates that museums re-evaluate what objects they select and display, and whose pasts they attempt to preserve.

MAYO, Edith 1983. *Women's history and public history: The museum connection*. Mayo reviews the history of women's history in the United States and charts the shifting pattern from promoting the preservation of historic houses (of prominent men) during the late nineteenth and

early twentieth century to increasing efforts, since the 1970s, to present more about the history of women in museums, historic sites and living museum interpretations.

MELOSH, Barbara 1989. *Speaking of women: museums' representations of women*. Melosh reviews a selection of exhibitions in the USA that explicitly focus on women's history.

MOGENSEN, Else 1988. *A living museum. The Women's Museum in Aarhus, Denmark*, is described.

MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA JOURNAL. Out of the Box. This special issue on women in museums covers: national museums and representations of Australian culture (Margaret Anderson), domestic work in museums (Lisa Dale, Ann Stephen, Kimberley Webber and Linda Young), Aboriginal women in museum representations (Heather Goodall), house museums (Elaine Lawson, Julia Clark, Paula Hamilton), ideology and museum practices (Julie Marcus), material culture and women's history (Anderson), etc. The volume also includes a useful bibliography on women and museums.

MUSEUM, 'Focus on Women'. This special issue was an outcome of the United Nations International Decade for Women (1975-85). Various articles provide a global view of the position of women in museums. Contributors were asked to comment on what images of women are reflected in museum exhibitions, how women are fairing in museum professions, how their prospects may be improved in the professions and how museums can improve the status of women. Countries covered include Australia, Britain, Germany, Japan, USA, Ecuador, Malaysia, Denmark, Nigeria, USSR, India, Mexico, Portugal, Botswana and the Caribbean.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA, 1994. *Images of Women*. Conference papers from a forum to examine current representation of women's issues in museum collections and exhibitions to encourage community participation in discussing these issues and to canvass national guidelines for collection and exhibition programs in the area of women's history. Contains keynote addresses from Robyn Archer (museums and giving people their own history), Jackie Huggins (Aboriginal women), The Hon. Michael Lavarch (national context for conference), Jocelynn Scutt, (professional women and work) Marilyn Opperman (culture and ethnic communities); opening and closing speeches from the Hon. Rosemary Crowley and Cathy Freeman; con-

ference discussion paper from Margaret Anderson and list of conference recommendations.

PORTER, Gaby 1988. Putting your house in order: representations of domestic life. Both this and the following article focus on how museum practices produce particular styles, and techniques of representation that are biased against women. The article discusses ways in which material culture and curatorial practices converge to make women invisible.

PORTER, Gaby 1990. Gender bias: representations of work in history museums. Porter discusses how social and economic positions of women interact with museum practices on material culture.

PORTER, Gaby 1991b. Partial truths. Porter discusses post-structuralist and psychoanalytical theories in relation to the construction of categories of femininity and masculinity within museums and argues the need for a theoretical approach to overcome patriarchal traditions in museum practices.

SAWER, Marian 1992. The guide seeks to overcome the lack of a national women's archive by identifying the location of material about women in politics in Australia from among the scattering of Commonwealth, State and university archives, various small women's archives and in the Faucet Library, London. Exhibitions, guides to collections, to women's organisations, indices, pictorial collections, monuments, oral histories, and film and video and guides to collections and women's organisations are detailed. In addition, sources of holdings are listed on a State by State basis.

SCHLERETH, Thomas 1989. Material culture research and North American Social History. This article includes discussion of women's history and draws on the work of Ruth Cowan (1979), and K.W. Carrell (1979) to suggest material culture studies should turn their attention to 'housewifery' and explore issues of women's role in the production and processing industries, servant management and social control, and the design, manufacture and social role of clothing, as well as exploring experiences of childbearing and child nurturing.

WEBBER, Kimberley 1987. Constructing Australia's past: The development of historical collections 1888-1938. Although this paper does not specifically refer to representation of women, Webber's account of the relationship between museums and national identity describes the importance of explorers, great men, bushmen and the ANZAC's in representations of Australia's

past in historical displays and in so doing illustrates the masculinist values which have prevailed in both museum work and construction of national identity.

APPENDIX 1

NEW YORK STATE MUSEUM GENDER EQUITY COMMITTEE

CRITERIA FOR GENDER EQUITY IN EXHIBITS, PROGRAMS AND PUBLICATIONS
(Quoted in Sullivan: 1994, 100-107)

Invisibility.

1. Are equally meaningful roles given to both men and women? What effort has been made to represent men and women as having equal status: professional, social, economic, etc?
2. Do the visible credits on the exhibit, film, or program reflect the broad range of individuals who contributed to the product?
3. Are men and women both equally represented by the artefacts? By people? By voice?
4. Are quotes and anecdotes from women in history and from important living women used as frequently as those from men?
5. If men and women have different roles, are these separate roles shown as being equally important to the overall development of culture?
6. Have opportunities been missed to present sex-fair images?

Stereotyping.

1. When people are presented visually in roles, is an effort made to avoid stereotyping their behaviours and aspirations? For example, are women always presented as nurturers and men as builders or persons involved in technology?
2. Are opportunities taken to give examples of both men and women in significant roles that do not contradict historical fact?
3. Unless there is a specific reason for not doing so (ie historical example), are both sexes portrayed from similar attitudinal perspectives (eg humour, satire, respect, etc)?
4. Is an effort made to avoid using only pastel colours and fuzzy line definition to illustrate females and only strong colours and bold lines to portray males?
5. Do graphs and charts use other than stereotypical stick figures?
6. Do the materials indicate mutual respect among the characters through their posture, clothing, and gesture?

7. Are physical and emotional stereotypes avoided? Is an effort made to avoid showing men only as vigorous and powerful and women only as delicate and fragile?

8. Do illustrations include other than young, attractive, and preferred body types?

Imbalance/Selectivity.

1. Do artefacts reflect varieties of populations and subcultures whenever possible?

2. If artefactual evidence is not available, how are unrepresented populations accounted for?

3. How is the planning staff of the exhibit, program, or film balanced for gender and other constituent group representation to provide a variety of experiences and perspectives?

4. Are experts such as sociologists brought in at appropriate times so that the full spectrum of peoples contributing to our society's evolution is reflected in all aspects of the museum?

5. Does the material presented reflect other value systems besides that of the majority white male culture?

6. If historical bias exists, how does the exhibit, film, or program, acknowledge this limitation? (e.g., in the past women couldn't attach their names to literature, music, inventions etc).

Unreality.

1. What effort is made to discuss, to exhibit, and/or to encourage programs on controversial topics such as discrimination and prejudice?

2. When a historically biased situation is cited or represented, how is it qualified as past values that are no longer acceptable?

Fragmentation.

1. Have certain issues that are gender-related been separated from the main body of materials, implying that these issues are less important?

Linguistic bias.

1. Is the generic 'she' used where the antecedent is stereotypically female (e.g. 'the housekeeper ... she')?

2. Is the generic 'he' used to include both males and females when gender is unspecified?

3. Does the material use sex-fair language initially and then slip into the use of the generic 'he' (e.g., 'A worker can have union dues deducted from his pay.')?

4. Are women identified by their own names rather than their husband's names (e.g. Madame Pierre Curie, Mrs F.D. Roosevelt)?

5. Are non parallel terms used in referring to males and females (e.g. Dr Jones and his secretary, Ellen; Senator Kennedy and Mrs Ghandi)?

6. When referring to both sexes, does the male term consistently precede the female (e.g. he and she, boys and girls)?

7. Are occupational titles used with -man as the suffix (e.g. chairman, businessman)?

8. When an individual holds a non traditional job, is there unnecessary focus on the person's sex (e.g. the women doctor, the male nurse)?

9. Are women described in terms of their appearance or marital and familial status, while men are described in terms of accomplishments or titles (e.g. Senator Kennedy and Golda Meir, mother of two)?

10. Is the text consistent with the illustrations in terms of sex fairness?

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CHAPTER 3

FROM MONOCULTURE TO MULTICULTURE: THE RESPONSE OF AUSTRALIAN MUSEUMS TO MULTICULTURALISM

ROBIN TROTTER

INTRODUCTION

Although some countries have recognised cultural differences within their borders — Canada with its bilingual cultural policy and New Zealand with a bicultural policy based on the Treaty of Waitangi — Australia is one of the few countries to adopt a policy of multiculturalism to reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of its population. This diversity is evident in an analysis of the population mix. Currently, about one in four of the population is of mixed Anglo-Celtic or non-Anglo-Celtic descent. Extensive inter-marrying has resulted in 10% of third and later-generation Australians having a single ethnic origin; about 30% having two origins; 40% with three or four; and 20% having five or more (Alomes & Jones, 1991: 418).

Abandonment of the White Australia policy in 1973 signalled a shift from the long-maintained policies of exclusion to multiculturalism. This, and earlier changes to government policy and immigration programs, have been tied to the historical processes of migration, the needs of a national economy, and socio-political pressures. In the 30 year period following World War II Australia experienced a period of mass migration which was driven by rapid expansion and structural changes in the economy. It was promoted through a government program of large-scale labour immigration under an assistance scheme. Although the government had promised that all assisted migrants would be Caucasian and most of British origin, a downturn in people wishing to migrate from those countries meant the scheme had to turn to other sources. Increasingly migrants were sought from Southern Europe then the Middle East and finally Asian countries. Newcomers were expected to adopt the language, customs and beliefs of mainstream Australians and to merge into the community. By the early 1970s a more conservative approach to immigration was being adopted. Initially moderate reductions were placed on immigrant targets and in the mid 1970s targets were dramatically pruned. These policy changes were the result of changing origins of migrant flows, population pressure,

economic inflation, unemployment and public attitudes and criticism of assimilationist policy.

As a precursor to multicultural policy, Jerzy Zubrzycki argued in 1968 for cultural diversity through the maintenance of migrant languages. In 1973 Al Grasby presented a paper, *A Multicultural Society for the Future*, in which he argued against assimilation and for retaining, and respecting, the cultures and customs of migrants. The Fraser government continued the momentum initiated by the Whitlam government with the establishment of an advisory body on multiculturalism — the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council. In 1977 it published *Australia as a Multicultural Society* which finally gave official recognition to multiculturalism. The following year, the Galbally Report on migrant welfare services appeared. This stressed the importance of maintaining ethnic cultures and confirmed a commitment to multiculturalism. In 1980, the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs was set up to develop public understanding of diverse cultures within Australia. Successive governments have affirmed this commitment to multiculturalism. Numerous landmark reports in the late 1980s and early 1990s demonstrated stronger government interest in promoting multiculturalism. These included a report on Folklife in Australia (1987), proceedings from a conference of museums, libraries, archives and historical collecting bodies on multiculturalism (1989), a report from the Office of Multicultural Affairs urging protection of cultural property of all Australians (1989), guidelines to encourage collecting institutions to become more reflective of cultural diversity (1991) and, in 1993, report from the Office of Multicultural Affairs promoting multicultural training in cultural institutions.

As government policies have changed as to who could and should be Australian citizens, so has the government's concept of Australian culture changed from mono-culturalist to multiculturalist. The concept of citizenship has also broadened from enfranchisement to incorporate social justice and cultural rights. As a result, museums and other collecting institutions are now being asked to represent this plurality. The extent of the response may mean the difference